

# NEWSLETTER#36

Somehow it is not difficult to write and think 2004, I guess, because so much else is happening. There is now a white plastic fence behind our home and all other homes that were built on a lot on the golf course plus the same white plastic fence from Highway 80 behind our golf course homes to Birchwood Parkway and then one mile along Birchwood Parkway to the west side of the former golf course. At that point the fence becomes six strands of barb wire back to Highway 80 and barb wire along the highway for about a mile back to where the white plastic fence starts. The investor bought 255 acres, which was 15 holes of golf course. He is putting cattle on it to reduce the taxes until a buyer comes along to pay what the investor feels its worth. I guess we should be thankful not to have barb wire behind our homes.

Most everyone who bought a lot in Port LaBelle has lost money but the only good thing we can say is it is a good cheap place to live because the taxable value is now just a little above what we have invested in our two lots and one house.

Many other things were happening while this fence was being built. Since 1996 when the General Development Utilities was purchased by the County, the same (5) five Port LaBelle residents have served on the Advisory Board and The Hendry County Commissioners have always rubber stamped or approved our actions. At the last meeting of the PLUS (Port LaBelle Utility System) board, which was several months ago, John Capece and I, with the help of our other Commissioner, Kevin McCarthy, were able to prove to Terry Kester that the county was at fault and could be sued for not going ahead with the water lines did he, at his last meeting, change his vote to go with John Capece and me to get the County moving forward. When George asked for the vote on the motion, made by John Capece, to proceed with the water lines to Banyan Village, he was so taken by surprise when Terry voted to approve the motion along with John and me that when he asked for the no vote not a thing was said and the vote was recorded as unanimous in favor of the motion.

Several months ago, but after our last PLUS meeting, Terry Kester (Chairman of the Hendry County Republican Party) resigned from the board because he was promoted to a leadership position on the State of Florida Republican Party in Tallahassee and moved there. When Terry resigned we needed another Hendry County resident on the board, I nominated Steve White who is an Attorney working full time for CHL HOLDINGS, Inc and C.F.S Properties, Inc both companies owned by Mr. Chuck Svirik. I took Steve to meet Darrell Harris, who is one of our two County Commissioners for Port LaBelle, in preparation for the December 9<sup>th</sup> 2003 County Commissioners meeting where I expected the Commissioners to approve Steve White because Darrell asked questions but didn't indicate any problem with Steve.

I went to the next BOCC (Board of County Commissioners) meeting not anticipating any problems only to find that Darrell Harris was behind another person to fill the vacancy. The vote was 4 to 1 in favor of Steve White with the only vote against being Darrell Harris because he felt Steve being on the board was a conflict of interest. I replied that both Svirik companies owned many thousands of lots in Port LaBelle including about 1400 in Banyan Village and is one of the counties largest tax payers. As the only owner, Chuck Svirik, was entitled to representation on the advisory board as our actions must be approved by the Board of County Commissioners to become effective. A few days later George Davis and Ken Downing both resigned from the board and we have done absolutely nothing since. I don't know what is planned because I can't find out anything from Roger Greer, the Utility Director or Lester Baird, the County Administrator although they are both very cordial but not saying anything about the situation. Even when Terry Kester voted for many years with George and Ken to keep the water lines from being installed to Banyan Village I tried to remain cordial but now I'm tired of turning the other cheek when the County still maintains they have done nothing wrong. Hendry County Administrator Lester Baird and Hendry County Attorney Kate English

both say they have only received one complaint from a dissatisfied lot owner and that letter was answered by Roger Greer on January 15, 2002 as reported to you in Newsletter#34. Now folks we all know that over the last 30 years most of you have written, called or e-mailed to the tax collector, tax appraiser or Clerk of Courts at least once and some many times to try and find out why your lot didn't have water and could be built on. Finally in 1998 and 1999 7,118 (to use the number used by Roger Greer to answer **the one complaint ever received**) water lines were installed in Units 1 thru 9 and Unit 102 but not to **Banyan Village**. Because as Roger stated in his letter, **unfortunately due to the low demand for Units 10, 11, 12 and 13 it is not feasible to run water lines to this area. At some time in the future, water lines will be installed to this area. Dates for this project have not been determined at this time.**

Now I ask **every** lot owner that gets this letter to write, fax or e-mail to the:

Hendry County BOCC  
P.O. Box 2340  
LaBelle, Florida 33975

This is short for Hendry County Board of County Commissioners

Fax # 863-675-5317

e-mail [lbsr@hendryfla.net](mailto:lbsr@hendryfla.net)

If your lot has water please help to make the county officials understand that it's your escrow money and lot investment they have toyed with for years at your expense. It has cost you many **thousands of Dollars** because you were forced to buy and build someplace else because the lot in Port LaBelle you planned to use as your retirement home didn't have water and you could not get a building permit so were forced to go elsewhere.

Even those lots that got water in 1998 and 1999 most of you planned to retire before then and thus were denied the use of the lot you paid for and had to keep paying taxes or lose the lot to the county. Many of you moved without notifying the Tax Collector of your new address.

Since Florida is a no deficit State, the State and all Counties must not borrow money but manage the affairs of the State or County on the taxes taken in for that year. The budget is set on the amount of taxes that will be taken in if everyone pays their taxes. When taxes are not paid the county is short of money to run the county so they are allowed by law to sell a tax certificate on the property in the amount of the taxes not paid. This gives the county the money budgeted and allows an investor to earn interest up to 18% or what ever is bid less than 18% at the tax sale. The investor must hold the tax certificate for at least two years before they can apply for a tax deed on the property covered by the tax certificate. Before a tax deed is issued a certified letter must be sent to the owner of the property (lot) at the last known address giving them the chance to pay the back taxes and keep the property from being taken by the tax certificate holder.

If you no longer get mail from the Hendry County Tax Collector and you want to find out what has happened or is going to happen to your lot you should write to:

Hendry County Tax Collector  
P.O. Box 1780  
LaBelle, FL 33975

or you may call at 863-675-5280

Good Luck

If you have or have a way to use e-mail please send me an e-mail at [reecer@olsusa.com](mailto:reecer@olsusa.com)  
So I will have your e-mail address. My Phone 863-675-0215 Fax 863-675-6510

Just got confirmation that our next PLUS meeting will be next Monday January 26, 2004 at 3:00 in the BOCC meeting room. It is being held with just three of us on the board so it would appear that the county has accepted defeat. You believe what you want to but my back is against the wall and both eyes are wide open. Harold—Please keep this letter in your hands until you write to BOCC.

*Harold*